

# ST. JOHN'S

## LUTHERAN HOSPITAL

Excellent Healthcare Close To Home

August 3, 2007

Mr. Stephen Johnson  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

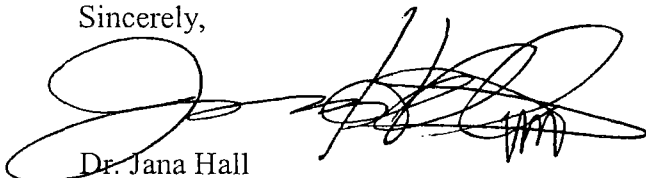
Dear Mr. Johnson:

At the Medical Staff of the Whole meeting on Monday, the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, the Medical Staff of St. John's Lutheran Hospital unanimously voted to urge you to declare a Public Health Emergency for Libby and the surrounding areas affected by asbestosis contamination. We make this request in the context of three specific resource needs.

1. **Medical Care** – It is imperative that the resources be made available so those affected by asbestosis exposure receive the screening and healthcare services they need. The only viable alternative that assures that such services are properly funded is the creation of a Medical Trust Fund, governed at a local level. Immediate steps must be taken to establish such a Trust Fund.
2. **Safety** – In the midst of the diligent clean-up efforts being conducted by your Agency, no one can answer the question, "How clean is safe?" We believe the answer to this question is long overdue. It is essential that the necessary resources be allocated so that required toxicity studies can be completed without compromising any clean-up activity.
3. **Economic Development** – The current expenditures of the EPA clean-up efforts have a significant positive impact on the local economy. When the clean-up is completed, as we hope it will be in the foreseeable future, the sudden loss of these expenditures will cripple this community. The resources necessary to begin aggressively investing in local economic development activities must begin without delay.

As the healthcare providers for this special community, we have seen firsthand the ravages of asbestosis exposure and disease. Declaration of a Public Health Emergency will allow the necessary resources to flow to those affected by this horrible tragedy. In medical terms, please make this declaration STAT!

Sincerely,



Dr. Jana Hall  
Medical Staff Vice-president